

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 GUATEM 00448 211908Z

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARAE-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 EB-08 H-01 PRS-01

DOT-00 /025 W

-----211956Z 000545 /54

P 211840Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4560

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE GUATEMALA 0448

FOR ARA, SCA, AND NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, CDES, GT

SUBJ: ZUICHE AIR CRASH

REF: GUATEMALA 0304

SUMMARY: ENGINE OF CRASHED CESSNA IS ESSENTIALLY INTACT AND EMBASSY BELIEVES NTSB INVESTIGATION IS DESIRABLE AND TECHNICALLY FEASIBLE. END SUMMARY.

1. AT REQUEST OF AMBASSADOR, MAJOR STERLING SOWDEN, USAF, AND CONSULAR OFFICER HARRY ORR TRAVELED JAN. 18-20 TO SITE OF CESSNA CRASH NOVEMBER 20 WHICH KILLED FIVE AMERICAN CITIZENS (REFTEL). THEY ACCOMPANIED GUATEMALAN CIVIL AERONAUTICS INSPECTOR WHO HAD WRITTEN ACCIDENT REPORT AND WHO ADMITTED TO THEM THAT HE HAD NEVER PREVIOUSLY INSPECTED REMAINS OF THIS CRASH ON THE GROUND BUT HAD FLOWN OVER THEM ONCE IN HELICOPTER.

2. SOWDEN AND ORR FOUND THAT ALMOST EVERY PART OF AIRCRAFT WHICH COULD BE PUT TO ANY HOUSEHOLD USE HAD BEEN REMOVED FROM SITE BY LOCAL RESIDENTS, AND THAT ENTIRE MOTOR (EXCEPT FOR CASE AND OIL PAN) AND ONE PROPELLER BLADE HAD BEEN TAKEN TO GUATEMALA CITY BY MARYKNOLL FATHERS (GROUP TO WHICH CESSNA PILOT BELONGED).

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 GUATEM 00448 211908Z

HOWEVER, FROM INSPECTION OF WHAT REMAINED AND VIEWING OF COLOR SLIDES TAKEN BY MARYKNOLL SUPERIOR SHORTLY AFTER ACCIDENT, SOWDEN AND ORR WERE ABLE TO DETERMINE THAT PLANE IMPACTED INTO APPROXIMATELY 30 DEGREE SLOPE OF MOUNTAIN APPARENTLY ATTEMPTING RETURN TO GUATEMALA CITY. THIS MAY SUGGEST PLANE WAS IN DIFFICULTY AND EYEWITNESS WHOM MARYKNOLL SUPERIOR TALKED TO SAID HE SAW WHITE SMOKE COMING FROM PLANE BEFORE CRASH. NEITHER

REMAINS AT SITE NOR THOSE IN GUATEMALA CITY INDICATE ANY EXTENSIVE FIRE BEFORE OR AFTER CRASH. SOLDIERS WHO ARRIVED AT SCENE 30 MINUTES AFTER CRASH REPORTED A SMALL FIRE AROUND PROPELLER WHICH THEY EASILY EXTINGUISHED. PLANE DEBRIS WAS NOT WIDELY SCATTERED BY IMPACT.

3. ON RETURN TO GUATEMALA CITY, MAJOR SOWDEN INSPECTED MOTOR WHICH IS IN HANGAR BELONGING TO AERIXCAN, FATHER WOODS' UNSCHEDULED AIRLINE. MOTOR HAS BEEN TAKEN APART, BUT ALL SIX CYLINDERS, CRANKSHAFT AND CAMSHAFT, AND ONE BLADE OF PROPELLER ARE THERE. FOUR CYLINDERS ARE INTACT; TWO ARE SOMEWHAT DAMAGED BY IMPACT. IT IS MAJOR SOWDEN'S OPINION THAT PROPELLER INDICATES IT WAS TURNING AT MOMENT OF CRASH. HE BELIEVES TESTS CAN BE RUN ON THE MOTOR WHICH SHOULD INDICATE WHETHER THERE WAS ANY MALFUNCTION OF ENGINE. ENGINE COULD BE SHIPPED TO US AND TESTS RUN THERE.

4. EMBASSY CONTINUES BELIEVE, AS STATED REFTTEL, THAT NTSB INVESTIGATION WOULD BE DESIRABLE AND WE NOW BELIEVE IT WOULD BE TECHNICALLY FEASIBLE. EMBASSY WILL REQUIRE ADEQUATE ADVANCE NOTICE OF ANY FURTHER US INVESTIGATION IN ORDER OBTAIN GOG CLEARANCE.
BOSTER

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPORTS, AIRCRAFT ACCIDENTS, INVESTIGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 21-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977GUATEM00448
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770023-0370
Format: TEL
From: GUATEMALA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770130/aaaabalk.tel
Line Count: 85
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 110e61d3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 GUATEMALA 304
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3541150
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ZUICHE AIR CRASH
TAGS: EAIR, CDES, GT
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/110e61d3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009